

## **St. Albertus Roman Catholic Church Historic District**

General boundaries: 4231 St. Aubin, includes church and rectory.

Local	✓	1/26/79
State	✓	7/26/74
State Marker	✓	6/27/75
National	✓	1/18/78



**St. Albertus Roman Catholic Church**  
Photo courtesy of Gabrielle Ganther



### **Historic overview:**

Detroit's early Polish immigration, which began in the 1850s, consisted mostly of persons from Prussian-dominated sectors of partitioned Poland. Because at least some of them understood German, and because they were accustomed to German influence in their lives, they tended to locate in or near German communities of Detroit and attended German ethnic churches. In 1871 the Polish community established their own Parish with the construction of a frame church to St. Wojciech. This Polish saint's name has no English equivalent, and the name St. Albertus, long established in English usage for the parish, is not the official parish name.

The first pastor was responsible for the erection of the first church and a parish school. Due to financial difficulties, the school property was sold at auction. Then the bishop purchased the property from the auction buyer, resulting in his dismissal. After several other pastors, Fr. Kolasinski was appointed, and the current brick church was built in 1884, being dedicated by Bishop Borgess. Kolasinski was later suspended, and in 1885 the controversy that developed between the parish and the bishop led to the issuance of a decree of interdict against the parish. This is a rare case of the use of this ancient form of disciplinary action in the Catholic Church, which lasted until 1887.

The succeeding years at St. Albertus have been calmer. In 1890 a rectory was constructed, and in the 1910s, lots were purchased behind the church, and a new school was built. The school has been closed, and the ethnic neighborhood that the church once served has changed. However, the rectory is undergoing restoration, and work will soon begin on the church. St. Albertus is no longer under the auspices of the Catholic archdiocese, yet it remains a spiritual home to Poles with its monthly mass and historical meetings and tours.

